

[Mr. MacCurrie]

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Francis Donovan, Thomaston, Conn.

January 10, 1939 Mr. MacCurrie

Mr. MacCurrie has found a listener who has heard nothing of his hospital experience, and he is making the most of it. The newcomer is a Mr. Gilpin, employee of the Clock Company, which this week is shut down for its annual inventory period. It develops,

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however, that Mr. Gilpin has had an operation of his own, and he is anxious to let us in on the details. The result is that while one holds the floor, the other with an impatience which there is no attempt to conceal, waits his turn to expatiate on his surgical ordeal. Both have a notably low opinion of hospitals and doctors.

Mr. MacCurrie: "They give you dom little service in the compensation ward. They know they'll get the money so why should they bother with you. Of coorse some of the nurses are all right. I got along good with most of them, but some I didn't take to and some didn't take to me.

I never said nothin' to any of them. I used to wait until the charge nurse came around and I'd tell her. I'm the kind of a man that speaks his mind. Now when they was takin' me down for X-ray ----

MR. GILPIN: "Them X-rays are a lot of baloney. They take them just to put extra money on your bill. Now when I was there"

MR. MACCURRE: "I wasn't payin' the bill."

MR. GILPIN: "Well, somebody was. Now when I went down, you know I had a kidney stone. They wanted to X-ray me / right away, I said, Nosir, you're not goin' to X-ray me. I said I was down here five years ago and had an X-ray and it showed where that stone wa. The doctor knows where that stone is, I said. I don't need no X-ray.

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"Well, it turned out that I was right. They got some new kind of a machine now, they can tell without an X-ray. The doctor said I didn't have to stay there at all. He said I could take the treatments right in his office. So that's what I did. And I want to tell you they were painful. They were so painful"

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MR. MACCURRE: "You don't have to tell me a dom thing about pain. When I was doon there with me broken leg I suffered plenty.

It was all right takin' me oot to the X-ray machine, because they slid me on from the good side, but takin' me off was another matter.

Every move they made I felt like there was a knife stickin' in me.

MR. GILPIN: "Them and their X-rays. When I took my wife down it was on a Wednesday. We know she didn't have a chance to live. She had a heart condition. She died the following Sunday. We took her in, and the doctor said she was dyin' and the only thing they could do for her was to give her absolute rest.

"He said he'd like to take an X-ray, but they didn't dare move her. Well, I come down the next night to see her she wasn't in the room. I says to the nurse, 'Where is she?' And she says, 'Down for X-ray.' I was goddam mad I tell you.

"When they brought her back I went to the doctor and I says, 'I thought you said she was in no condition to be moved. Now I find you takin' her down for X-rays. What's the idea? I was mad. 'The only reason I can see for it is that you want to put an extra ten or fifteen dollars on my bill,' I says. 'You endanger my wife's life just to put an extra ten dollars on the bill.' He couldn't give me an answer.

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"After she died they came to me and they said they'd like to perform a post mortem. I says nothin' doing.' I says you won't put a knife to her body while I have anything to say about it."

MR. MACCURRE: "They can't do it withoot they ask you. I remember"

MR. GILPIN: "And when it come time to pay the bill I says to them:

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'I'll pay your bill,' I says: 'but you needn't put that ten dollars or whatever it is for that X-ray on there.' 'I won't pay it,' I says.

MR. MACCURRE: "Those goddam doctors have an eye for a dollar.

When the wards started to thin out down there, they used to call them all together and tell 'em they better bring some patients in if they expected to keep the place runnin.'

"They're all hungry for money. Even this fella here, He's a good doctor, I'll give him credit, but he's for the insurance companies every time. Stopped my compensation b'God the day I left the hospital."

MR. GILPIN: "There was a fella down there for a prostate gland operation...."

MR. MACCURRE: "That's what old George Anderson had. They gave him the first one -- you know they have to do it in two operations -- and they had to wait so long for the second, he got disgusted and went home. Somethin' happened, it healed wrong or somethin,' anyway they couldn't give him the second one on time, and he wouldn't wait any longer. He's home now, and feelin' pretty good.

"As a matter of fact," Mr. MacCurrie says, reaching for his overcoat, "I'm goin' over to see him now. I knew him over in the old country." He sits down to draw on his rubbers. "Paper says snow tonight."

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After he has gone Mr. Gilpin lights a cigarette, looks out the window for a while in silence. Then he says, pointing to a passerby:

"There's a man who could have been sitting pretty today if he hadn't tried to make a fortune in stock. He had enough to retire on fifteen years ago. Ran one of the busiest stores in this town for years, when times were good. But he wasn't satisfied, he wanted to

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be a millionaire. Now look at him. He's workin' seven days a week in his old age, when he ought to be takin' it easy.

"Why, when he was runnin' his place here, local merchants were all making money. It was too damn much trouble to buy out of town.

Now they all go to Waterbury or other cities. The trolley comin' in, that was what started to make it tough for local merchants.

"When they first put the trolleys in here, they were runnin' 'em every fifteen minutes, then every half hour. And they were all crowded, too. Then they started runnin' every hour. People got in the habit of goin' out of town to buy.

"John Girard used to run a five and ten cent store here. Only everything he sold cost more than five or ten cents. People knew they were payin' too much for stuff, but they didn't have no other way of gettin' it outside takin' a train to Waterbury, and that was too much trouble. The trolleys put John out of business.

"Now those goddam buses, they're worse than nothin' at all.

Why is it the people always got the firty end of it, young fella, do you know? As soon as a transportation company starts losin' money they do just what they damn please with their schedules and it don't make any difference whether the patrons suffer or not.

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"But when they're makin' money, just try to cut in on their franchise. A bunch of local boys tried runnin' buses to Waterbury years ago in opposition to the trolleys. They got through one morning when the trolleys couldn't run on account of the snow.

But what happened? The Public Utilities commission made ordered them to stop runnin' in competition with the trolley company.

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“And that's the way it goes. Yessir, that's the way it goes.”